



Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct 2017 Annual Report

This is the annual report of the Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct ("Commission") for calendar year 2017.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

Judicial conduct commissions exist in every state and serve a vital role in promoting public confidence in the independence, impartiality, integrity, and competence of the judicial branch of government. The Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct was created in 1970, when voters approved Article 6.1 of the Arizona Constitution. Article 6.1 was amended in 1988, establishing the Commission as an independent state agency responsible for investigating complaints against judicial officers serving on the supreme court, court of appeals, superior court, justice of the peace courts, and municipal courts. The Commission does not have jurisdiction over federal judges or administrative law judges. Judicial officers who are subject to the Commission's jurisdiction must comply with the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct ("Code") adopted by the Arizona Supreme Court.

COMMISSION PROCEDURES

The Commission's rules prescribe the procedures for investigating and resolving judicial conduct complaints. The rules are available on the Commission's website at <http://www.azcourts.gov/portals/137/rules/Arizona%20Code%20of%20Judicial%20Conduct.pdf>.

Anyone who believes that a judge has engaged in misconduct may submit a complaint to the Commission. The Commission may also open an investigation on its own initiative. Complaint forms are available on the Commission's website, by mail, and at the Commission's office.

Members of the Commission's staff review each new complaint, including relevant court documents and recordings, and prepare a written report for Commission members' review. Unless unavailable due to a conflict of interest or other commitment, every Commission member reviews each docketed complaint. If the Commission concludes no ethical misconduct has been established, the complaint is dismissed, and the complainant and judge(s) named in the complaint are notified in writing of that action.

Example: A defendant in an injunction against harassment proceeding alleges that a justice of the peace was rude and condescending. Commission staff obtains the audio/video recording of the proceeding and prepares a written report that Commission members review, along with the written complaint. The recording establishes that the justice of the peace was not rude, did not raise her voice, and gave both sides an opportunity to be heard. The Commission concludes the complaint was not substantiated and votes to dismiss it.

If a complaint raises issues warranting further investigation, Commission staff obtains additional information, which may include a response from the judge, court records, recordings and transcripts, and witness interviews. The Commission's staff attorneys then prepare a report that Commission members review, along with any response from the judge, recordings, court documents and witness interviews, before determining the appropriate disposition. After considering all of the materials, the Commission may dismiss the complaint, issue a public reprimand, impose terms such as counseling or educational programming, or direct its disciplinary counsel to file formal charges.

Example: A litigant alleges that a superior court judge yelled during a hearing, was extremely impatient, and gave her a disproportionately short period of time to present her case in comparison to the time allowed the adverse party. Commission staff obtains the recording of the proceeding and prepares a written report. After reviewing the report, the complaint, the judge's response, and the recording, the Commission concludes the judge did not comply with Rule 2.6 (ensuring the right to be heard) or Rule 2.8(B) (requiring judges to be patient, dignified, and courteous). After considering relevant aggravating and mitigating circumstances, the Commission publicly reprimands the judge. The reprimand is posted to the Commission's website, where it is available for public review.

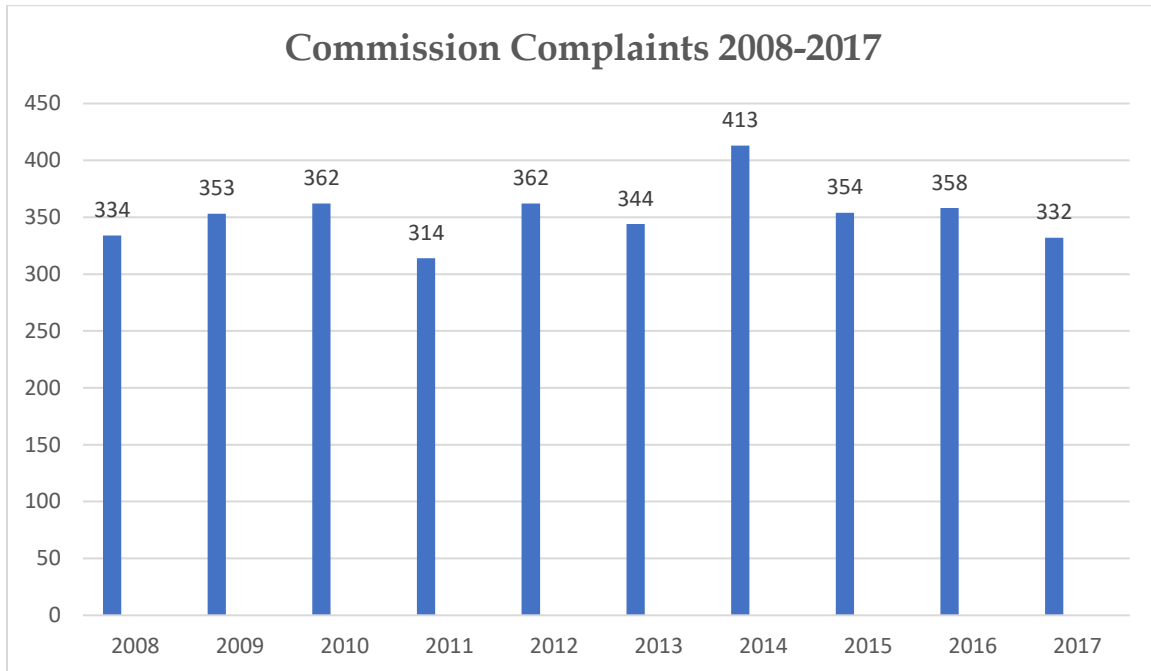
If investigation of a complaint suggests that a judge's conduct may warrant a sanction greater than a public reprimand – i.e., censure, suspension or removal -- the Commission's chairperson may appoint an investigative panel comprised of three

Commission members (one judge, one lawyer, and one public member) to determine whether reasonable cause exists to believe the judge engaged in misconduct. If the investigative panel makes such a finding, disciplinary counsel files formal charges, and the matter proceeds to an evidentiary hearing. Based on the record in the formal proceeding, the hearing panel -- comprised of Commission members who did not serve on the investigative panel -- issues written findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation as to the appropriate disposition. The final decision in a formal proceeding rests with the Arizona Supreme Court.

Complainants are not parties to Commission proceedings. Although complainants may be asked to provide information during investigations or to testify at formal hearings, the only parties to the proceedings are the judge and the Commission. The judge may be represented by counsel at his or her own expense. Both parties may conduct discovery and subpoena witnesses to testify at hearings.

FILING TRENDS

In 2017, the Commission docketed 332 new complaints -- a slight decrease from 2016, when 358 complaints were filed. As of January 31, 2018, the Commission had resolved most of the complaints filed in 2017, with the remainder under review. The following chart shows complaint filings over a ten-year period:



2017 DISPOSITIONS

The dispositions of all complaints filed with the Commission since 2006 are posted on the Commission's website -- www.azcourts.gov/azcjc. In 2017, the following dispositions occurred:

Censures (1)

- Pima County Justice of the Peace Paula Aboud was censured by the Arizona Supreme Court in Case No. 17-019 and ordered to undergo judicial ethics training and pay the costs and attorneys' fees the Commission incurred in the formal proceedings against her. Judge Aboud violated Rules 1.1, 1.2, and 2.8(B) by taking a copy of an assessment and answer key while participating in new judge orientation.

Reprimands (6)

- Pima County Justice of the Peace Maria L. Felix was reprimanded in Case No. 16-296. Judge Felix violated Rules 1.2, 1.3, 4.1(A)(3), and 4.1(A)(5) by gathering nominating petition signatures for a constable candidate, publicly endorsing that candidate, lending the prestige of her judicial office to advance the interests of another, and participating in another person's campaign for elective office.
- Maricopa County Justice of the Peace Rachel Torres Carrillo was reprimanded in Case No. 16-319 for violating Rules 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.5(A), and 2.6(A). Although the defendant in an eviction proceeding avowed that she had tendered her rent, Judge Carrillo did not set the matter for trial and instead entered judgment against the defendant. After the defendant retained counsel and filed a motion, Judge Carrillo vacated the judgment. Judge Carrillo had previously been reprimanded for similar conduct in an eviction proceeding.
- After a formal hearing, Maricopa County Justice of the Peace Andrew Hettinger was reprimanded in Case No. 16-329 for violations stemming from his campaign for judicial office. Judge Hettinger used a logo that stated, "Andrew Hettinger Justice of the Peace" without including the word "elect" before his name or the word "for" between his name and the position sought, as required by Rule 4.3(D). Additionally, he obtained a domain name that one of his opponents had publicly stated he would be using and redirected internet traffic from that site to his own website, in violation of Rules 4.2(A) and Rule 4.3(A) and (J).
- Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Pro Tem Launi Jones-Sheldon was reprimanded in Case No. 17-008 for violating Rules 1.2 and 2.4(B). Judge Jones-Sheldon conducted a settlement conference in a family court matter during which the parties discussed and agreed to – as a condition of settlement -- using a business in which Judge Jones-Sheldon had a financial interest.
- Phoenix Municipal Court Judge Wilbur N. Hudson, III was reprimanded in Case No. 17-066 for violating Rules 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.6(A), and 2.9(A). Judge Hudson conducted an *ex parte* hearing at which the father of a criminal defendant urged release of his child to a behavioral health treatment provider, and Judge Hudson indicated the defendant could be released. Neither the State nor the defendant was present during the hearing, and the victims had no notice of the hearing.
- Maricopa County Superior Court Judge John R. Ditsworth was reprimanded in Case No. 17-197 for violating Rules 1.2 and 2.8(B) based on inappropriate comments he made during a sentencing hearing, including a statement that the defendant should have "dumb-ass" engraved on his forehead.

Resignations (1)

- In Case No. 2017-010, Maricopa County Justice of the Peace Jimmie Hernandez admitted violating the Maricopa County Electronic Communications Policy and Rules 1.1 and 1.2. Based on Judge Hernandez' resignation from office and his agreement to never again seek or accept a position involving service as a judicial officer in Arizona, the Commission closed its investigation without further action.

Warning and Advisory Letters

When dismissing a complaint, the Commission may include warning or advisory comments. The Commission typically issues an advisory letter when a judge has not technically violated the Code, but the Commission believes the judge could benefit from advice regarding a particular topic. Warning letters are generally issued when the Commission believes a judge came close to violating the Code or when a technical violation occurred, but mitigating circumstances dictate against a public sanction.

The Commission issued 17 warning letters and 18 advisory letters in 2017:

Warning Letters

- The Commission warned a superior court judge about the use of profane language during a settlement conference.
- A pro tem justice of the peace self-reported that he had advised a relative of a pending warrant, which the family member was able to address before the warrant issued. Although another judge presided over the family member's appearance in court, the Commission determined the judge's conduct ran afoul of Rules 1.2, 1.3, 2.4(B), and 2.9(A). After considering mitigating factors, the Commission dismissed the self-report with a warning.
- A candidate for justice of the peace failed to ensure that his campaign materials fully complied with Rules 4.1 and 4.3. The Commission warned the judge about complying with Canon 4.
- A pro tem justice of the peace received a warning for not allowing a *pro se* litigant to cross-examine witnesses. The Commission reminded the judge to afford litigants all procedural rights and encouraged additional training regarding eviction proceedings.
- The Commission issued a warning to a superior court judge who made an improper statement about a participant in a pending matter, calling the judge's impartiality into question.

- A superior court judge received a warning based on his use of profanity and comments he made that suggested he had prejudged a case.
- A superior court judge received a warning for failing to be patient, dignified, and courteous to counsel.
- The Commission issued a warning to a municipal court judge who engaged in an independent investigation about a case and made improper comments about individuals likely to appear before him.
- The Commission issued a warning to a retired superior court judge whose website used his judicial title, as well as a photograph of him wearing a robe, in advertising legal services. The retired judge deactivated the website upon receiving correspondence from the Commission. The Commission warned the judge that his advertisements, websites, social media pages, and other promotional material must comply with the Code and Ethics Opinion 16-02.
- A municipal court judge who failed to complete mandatory judicial training received a warning and was directed to complete the missing hours and provide proof of completion to the Commission.
- The Commission issued a warning to a superior court judge who failed to allow a party to be heard during a dependency proceeding, in violation of Rule 2.6(A).
- The Commission issued a warning to a superior court judge who exhibited inappropriate demeanor, in violation of Rule 2.8(B).
- The Commission warned a superior court judge to avoid even the appearance of impropriety in conversing with spectators during a criminal trial.
- The Commission issued a warning to a pro tem superior court judge who self-reported a delayed ruling, reminding the judge of his obligations under Rule 2.5, Rule 2.12, and Ethics Opinion 06-02.
- The Commission issued a warning to a justice of the peace who, as a candidate, used campaign signs suggesting she already held the office and improperly displayed an endorsement by law enforcement, in violation of Rules 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.
- The Commission issued a warning to a justice of the peace who engaged in rude behavior toward litigants in an eviction proceeding.
- The Commission warned a justice of the peace of his obligation to be patient, dignified, and courteous when dealing with other judges and court staff.

Advisory Letters

- Six of the 18 advisory letters issued in 2017 arose in matters where superior court judicial officers self-reported delayed rulings. The Commission advised those judges to review Rule 2.5(A) and Ethics Opinion 06-02 and to implement procedures to avoid similar delays in the future.
- A pro tem justice of the peace was advised of the need to ensure that judgments she issues are consistent with rulings stated in open court.
- The Commission advised a superior court judge of his obligations under Rule 2.8(B) based on a complaint of improper demeanor in a family court proceeding.
- The Commission advised a justice of the peace to consider the appearance of impropriety and potential for error when amending a party's petition based on verbal assertions, to avoid extrajudicial activities that lead to frequent disqualification, and to avoid *ex parte* communications.
- The Commission issued an advisory letter to a justice of the peace regarding Rule 2.7 (responsibility to decide) and recusal considerations.
- The Commission advised a superior court judge in a family law matter of his obligation under Rule 2.8(A) to ensure order and decorum in the court.
- The Commission advised a superior court commissioner of his obligations under Rules 1.2 (promoting confidence in the judiciary) and 2.6(A) (ensuring the right to be heard).
- The Commission advised a superior court judge pro tem to refrain from making comments that suggest he made a decision based on facts outside the record.
- The Commission advised a pro tem justice of the peace to be mindful of Rule 1.2 (promoting confidence in the judiciary) when writing law-related articles.
- The Commission advised a justice of the peace to be properly attired when taking the bench in order to maintain the dignity of and promote confidence in the judiciary, as required by Rule 1.2.
- The Commission advised a justice of the peace to set clear parameters for the scope of a hearing so as to prevent frustration by the litigants and demeanor-related complaints.

- The Commission reminded a municipal court judge of the requirements of Arizona Supreme Court Rule 122 (use of recording devices in a courtroom) and of the need to ensure that court staff understand the rule.
- The Commission advised a justice of the peace to review files before entering judgments to ensure compliance with Rule 2.5 (competence, diligence, and cooperation).

Dismissals

Most complaints are dismissed because the alleged misconduct cannot be substantiated or because the conduct at issue is not an ethical violation. For example, many complainants assert that a judge ruled against them because he or she was biased, inattentive, or incompetent. However, absent a pattern of error or intentional disregard of the law, an erroneous legal ruling will not typically be grounds for judicial discipline. Litigants aggrieved by legal rulings must instead pursue their appellate remedies.

After a complaint is dismissed, the names of the complainant and the judge, as well as other identifying information, are redacted from the public record. The redacted complaint and the Commission's disposition order are available for public review on the Commission's website.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

The Arizona Constitution dictates the Commission's membership, which consists of eleven individuals serving six-year terms. Six judges are appointed by the Arizona Supreme Court: two from the court of appeals, two from the superior court, one from a justice court, and one from a municipal court. Two attorney members are appointed by the State Bar of Arizona. Three public members -- who cannot be attorneys or active or retired judges -- are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate.

Members are not compensated but receive reimbursement for actual expenses incurred in serving on the Commission. The Commission meets periodically throughout the year and is supported by staff located in the State Courts Building in Phoenix. Although the Commission operates independently, its rules are approved by the Arizona Supreme Court.

The Commission's current members are:

Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One

Diane M. Johnsen is a judge on Division One of the Arizona Court of Appeals, located in Phoenix. Judge Johnsen, who grew up in Arizona's Copper Basin, graduated

from the University of Arizona and then worked as a reporter at the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson for five years before deciding to pursue a career in law. She received her J.D. degree from Stanford University and then served as a law clerk for Judge Ben C. Duniway on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. Upon returning to Arizona, she practiced commercial litigation at Osborn Maledon in Phoenix before being appointed to the court of appeals in 2006 by Governor Janet Napolitano. In 2015, she earned a Masters of Laws in Judicial Studies from Duke University. Judge Johnsen has served as Chief Judge of Division One and is a member of the American Law Institute. She lives in Scottsdale; she and her husband have three grown children.

Arizona Court of Appeals, Division Two

Peter J. Eckerstrom (*Commission Vice-Chair*) is Chief Judge of Division Two of the Arizona Court of Appeals. He was appointed to the court by Governor Napolitano in 2003. Judge Eckerstrom earned his bachelor's degree from Yale University and his law degree from Stanford University. Before his appointment to the court, his practice focused on criminal defense with an emphasis on capital trial and capital appellate litigation. In that capacity, he served on the Ninth Circuit's Federal Habeas Corpus Oversight Committee.

Judge Eckerstrom has served on the Arizona Supreme Court Commissions on Judicial Performance Review and Court Technology. He has acted as an adjunct professor at the University of Arizona, James E. Rogers College of Law, teaching trial practice and, more recently, a seminar on Capital Punishment. Judge Eckerstrom is a resident of Tucson. He is married to Ann-Eve Pedersen, a public education advocate, and they have a son, Lars. Judge Eckerstrom is an enthusiastic owner of a fantasy baseball team and an avid college basketball fan.

Arizona Superior Court, Maricopa County

George H. Foster, Jr. is a Judge of the Maricopa County Superior Court. He is a graduate of Boston College Law School in Newton, Massachusetts. He completed his undergraduate work at The City University of New York, where he graduated *magna cum laude*. He was a law clerk to the Hon. David S. Nelson of the Federal District Court in Boston, Massachusetts. He was admitted to the State Bar of Arizona in 1983.

Judge Foster practiced with the law firm O'Connor, Cavanagh, Anderson, Westover Killingsworth & Beshears from 1983 to 1990. His practice began in commercial real-estate transactions and finance. It progressed into banking, bankruptcy, securities, land use and zoning law. In 1990, he joined the firm of Allen, Kimerer & LaVelle and continued in the commercial practice, where he also became involved in civil rights litigation, securities litigation and general commercial litigation. In 1993, he joined the firm of Wilenchik & Bartness, where he was managing attorney from 1996 through 1999.

Judge Foster began his judicial career in 1999 as a commissioner in the Juvenile Division of the Maricopa County Superior Court. He was appointed to the Maricopa County Superior Court as a trial judge by Governor Janet Napolitano on June 30, 2003. Judge Foster has served in each division: Family, Civil, Juvenile and Criminal. Judge Foster has served as an adjunct professor at The Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, where he taught a course in Advanced Real Estate Transactions. He has served as President of the Thurgood Marshall Inn of Court, as a member of the State Bar Civil Practice and Procedures Committee and Rules of Professional Conduct Committee, and as chairman of the Maricopa County Superior Court Family Court Division Rules Committee. He has also served as a member of the Arizona Supreme Court's Committee on Superior Court and as a pro tem judge on the Arizona Court of Appeals. He also serves on the Commission on Judicial Performance Review.

Arizona Superior Court, Pima County

Gustavo Aragón is a native of Tucson, Arizona. He graduated from Tucson High School, the University of Arizona, and the University of Arizona College of Law. He is admitted to practice law in Arizona state court, the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Judge Aragón began his professional career with the United States Treasury in 1977 as an estate and gift tax attorney. Thereafter, he worked as a prosecutor with the Pima County Attorney's Office from 1979 through 1985. He thereafter joined the law firm of Kimble, Gothreau and Nelson from 1985 to April 1988, defending personal injury claims. He continued his law practice at Haralson, Miller, Pitt, Feldman & McAnally, representing plaintiffs in personal injury cases. He became a partner in the firm in January 1993 and remained there until his appointment to the Arizona Superior Court in May 2006. He was assigned to the Criminal Bench from May 2006 to January 2009 and then assigned to the Juvenile Bench from January 2009 to June 2012. He served as Associate Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. Judge Aragón was assigned to the Civil Bench from June 2012 to December 2017. Since mid-December 2017 he has been assigned to the Criminal Bench.

Judge Aragón enjoys participating in community activities and volunteer work. The Pima County Volunteer Lawyers Program named him Outstanding Volunteer Lawyer of the Year in 1995. In the past, he has volunteered as an assistant scoutmaster for the Catalina Council, Boy Scouts of America, Teen Court student mentor, Courts Are Us mentor, and he was on the Southern Arizona Legal Aid Volunteer Lawyers Program Advisory Board. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Pima County Bar Foundation. Judge Aragón also volunteers as a mentor for the James E. Rogers College of Law

Surprise City Court

Louis Frank Dominguez (*Commission Chair*) is the Presiding Judge for the Surprise City Court. He was a judge on the Phoenix Municipal Court from October 1994 until March 2013, when he was appointed as the Surprise City Court Presiding Judge. Judge Dominguez received his B.A. in Psychology at Arizona State University and graduated from the A.S.U. College of Law.

Judge Dominguez is a Past Board Chair of Valley Leadership. He is also a member of the Arizona Minority Judges Caucus, Los Abogados and the Arizona Supreme Court Judicial Conference Planning Committee. His volunteer efforts focus on working with youth in the community and leadership development. In April 1998, Judge Dominguez received a “Distinguished Leadership Award” from the National Association of Community Leadership. In June 2003, he was presented with a “Distinguished Service Award” from the Arizona Supreme Court.

Judge Dominguez is a current member of the Arizona Supreme Court Work Group on the Code of Judicial Conduct. He also served as a member of the Arizona Task Force on the Code of Judicial Conduct in 2008 and 2009. Judge Dominguez is also a member of the Arizona Judicial Council. He has served as faculty for the Arizona Supreme Court, the State Bar of Arizona, and other organizations on various law-related topics. He has also served as Chair of the Arizona Supreme Court Limited Jurisdiction New Judge Orientation Program. In May 2010, the Arizona Supreme Court presented Judge Dominguez with a 2009 Trainer Excellence Award. This award was in recognition of his contributions to the goal of excellence in judicial education and his commitment to serving the Arizona judiciary as faculty.

Bagdad-Yarnell Justice Court

Anna Mary Glaab has been the Justice of the Peace in Bagdad-Yarnell Justice Court since 1992. Judge Glaab presides in both the Bagdad and Yarnell courts in southwestern Yavapai County and is actively involved in judicial education and the Arizona Justice of the Peace Association. She is a third-generation Arizona native and was raised on her family’s cattle ranch in central Arizona. The Arizona Supreme Court recognized Judge Glaab as the 2014 Judge of the Year for her outstanding and long-term service to her community and the Arizona court system.

Lawyer Members

Art Hinshaw is a Clinical Professor of Law at the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. His research and teaching interests lie in the field of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), primarily mediation and negotiation. His research bridges ADR theory and practice, and his teaching responsibilities include the Lodestar

Mediation Clinic and Negotiation, among other ADR courses. Professor Hinshaw is active in the ADR community, having served on several academic and professional committees at the state and national levels. Currently, he serves as a member of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Mediator Ethical Guidance. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution at the University of Missouri School of Law and is a contributor to *Indisputably, the ADR Prof Blog*.

Professor Hinshaw graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with an A.B. in History (1988) and he received both his J.D. and LL.M. from the University of Missouri (1993 and 2000). He joined the College of Law faculty after teaching at the University of Missouri School of Law and at the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis. Before his academic career, he practiced law in Kansas City, Missouri.

J. Tyrrell Taber is a trial lawyer licensed to practice law in Arizona and California. Ty has represented plaintiffs and defendants since 1977. He is a certified specialist in Injury & Wrongful Death litigation. Ty has served on the Board of Directors for the Arizona Association of Defense Counsel and the Arizona Association for Justice. He has also served the state as a volunteer for the Town of Paradise Valley Magistrate Court and the Arizona Court Reporter Board.

Public Members

Christopher R. Ames has 40 years of software industry experience, ranging from programmer to senior executive. He is the President of Paragon Technology, Inc., a company he co-founded in 1983. Early clients included the Apache County Treasurer and Trans World Airlines. In 1992, he entered into a project management contract with ADS Communications, Inc., for the development of its field service product. Over the next 11 years, he led the company through several phases of expansion in product offering and corresponding revenue growth. ADS was purchased by EFI (Electronics For Imaging, Inc.) in 2004, and Chris continued his responsibility as Chief Technology Officer for another 2 years. Chris is a patented inventor and holds a B.S. in Computer Information Systems from Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business. The Ames family has lived in the east valley since 1976. Chris was a member of the Capital and Development Fees subcommittee of the 2009 Town of Gilbert Citizen's Budget Committee and is an original member of Gilbert's Operation Welcome Home Committee.

Roger Barton is the owner of Badger Roofing, a Prescott area owned and operated licensed residential and commercial roofing contractor business serving Central and Northern Arizona. Roger is a native of Arizona with more than thirty years of experience in sales and marketing of a variety of products and services. Throughout his professional life, he has sought opportunities to serve within the communities he has resided in and as a result, has volunteered on a number of boards of organizations.

Colleen Concannon (*Commission Secretary*) is the Project Portfolio Manager for the City of Phoenix's IT Project Management Office. She is a native Tucsonan who received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Arizona, a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Texas, and a Master of Science in Accounting from the University of Houston. She has worked in finance, executive management, information technology, and project management in both the public and private sectors throughout her career. She is also a dedicated community volunteer and has served as a board member for numerous public and private organizations within the State of Arizona.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Members of the Commission, as well as Commission staff, regularly participate in programs designed to educate judges, court staff, and judicial candidates about their ethical obligations and about Commission procedures. A sampling of programs that Commission members and staff participated in during 2017 includes:

- Limited Jurisdiction New Judge Orientation
- General Jurisdiction New Judge Orientation
- Maricopa County Justice of the Peace Training
- Maricopa County Justice Court Small Claims Hearing Officer Training
- Maricopa County Justice Court Civil Traffic Hearing Officer Training
- Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Judicial Staff Training
- Supreme Court and Court of Appeals Law Clerk Training
- Ethics Presentations at the Annual Arizona Judicial Conference
- Maricopa County Justice Court Judge Pro Tem Training

COMMISSION FINANCES

The Commission is funded through the legislature's general fund appropriation to the Arizona judicial branch. The Commission's budget totals approximately \$500,000. Employee compensation, benefits, and rent account for more than 90% of the Commission's budget.

COMMISSION STAFF

The Commission's staff consists of an executive director, one full-time lawyer, one part-time lawyer, a commission specialist, and an administrative assistant. The Commission also has an employee who works four hours a week to support its database and related technology.

Margaret H. Downie is Executive Director of the Commission and Staff Director of the Arizona Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee. Before assuming these roles in November 2017, Ms. Downie was a judge on the Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One, from 2008 to 2017. Prior to that, she spent 11 years on the Maricopa County Superior Court, where she was Associate Presiding Judge and Civil Presiding Judge. Ms. Downie received her J.D. from Georgetown University. She previously served as a member of the Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct and the Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee. She is an active member of the State Bar of Arizona.

April Elliott has been the Commission's disciplinary counsel since October 2014. Ms. Elliott is an active member of the State Bar of Arizona and most recently served as the Public Defender in Pinal County. Her previous experience includes serving as a Pinal County family court commissioner and Pinal County Superior Court Judge.

Meredith Vivona serves as Independent Bar Counsel pursuant to Arizona Supreme Court Administrative Order 2016-44. That position is supervised by the Commission's executive director and is housed in the Commission's office. Ms. Vivona investigates and resolves, through the lawyer discipline process, complaints filed against lawyers that, for conflict of interest reasons, cannot be handled by the State Bar's lawyer regulation staff. She also assists the Commission in investigating and resolving judicial complaints. Ms. Vivona is an active member of the State Bar of Arizona who previously worked in private practice in Phoenix for more than 10 years.

Kimberly Welch serves as Commission Specialist – a position she has held since March of 2014. Ms. Welch has worked in the legal field for 35 years, including positions with large national law firms, where she assisted with complex civil litigation, government contracts, corporate and taxation law, and tort litigation. She is a certified small business manager.

Timothy Dow became the Commission's administrative assistant in November 2017. Mr. Dow previously worked at the State Bar of Arizona as a resource center specialist. He served in the United States Army for ten years.